

3/13/01

To: CINMS Advisory Council

From: Linda Krop, Conservation Representative

Re: Conservation Working Group Report, 3/12/01

The Conservation Working Group (CWG) met on March 12, 2001.

Announcements:

- SAC meeting 3/14/01
- MRWG meeting and forum 3/21/01
- Applications still being accepted for SAC research seat

Marine Reserves:

- Update and Discussion.

Linda provided a brief background regarding the MRWG process and brought the audience up to date regarding the process.

Greg Helms, a member of the MRWG, explained the issues that will be addressed at the 3/21/01 MRWG meeting and public forum. He reviewed the packet for the 3/14 SAC meeting and explained the basis and import of the various map concepts.

Mike McGinnis, a former member of the MRWG, prprovided his perspective on the MRWG process. Specifically, Mike informed the group that he had resigned from the MRWG because he believed that the negotiation process had departed from a good faith consideration of the scientific information available concerning the decline in resources in the CINMS, the threats to the remaining resources of the CINMS, and the state of ecosystem disturbance. He also commented on the socioeconomic report, which noted that 80% of the fish caught in the CINMS is exported to eastern Asia. He expressed the need to educate and galvanize the public.

CWG and public discussion followed. Jesse Swanhuyser reminded the audience and CWG that the reserves under consideration would only apply to the existing CINMS boundaries, not any potential expansion of the CINMS. In response to a question

regarding the schedule for the MRWG and issue of marine reserves, Greg answered that the MRWG intends to complete its process and come up with a recommendation on May 16. That recommendation, if it occurs, would be presented to the SAC on May 23. The SAC and the CINMS do not have the authority to regulate fisheries or approve marine reserves; rather, such decisions will be made by other agencies. The California Fish and Game Commission will consider the recommendation from the MRWG in August, 2001.

All present agreed that public education was a priority.

The CWG offered the following comments regarding the MRWG process:

- The CWG believes that marine reserves should be based upon science.
- The MRWG should negotiate in good faith, based upon the technical information that is presented to the working group.
- Marine reserves should include a representation of all habitats.
- The MRWG recommendation should include a network of reserves.
- The reserves should include areas on both the north and south sides of each islands; accordingly, there should be two reserve areas on each island – one on the north and one on the south – extending from shore to the current boundary of the CINMS.
- The CWG members present were in favor of “maximum” reserves, preferably representing a minimum of 50% of the CINMS. (Note: the CWG recognizes that quantitative numbers such as 50% are only appropriate if the above-referenced criteria such as representation are included.)
- The CWG noted that Map “A” provided the closest relationship to fulfilling the minimum 30% criteria for each feature and habitat type set forth by the science panel recommendations. (Note: the CWG looks forward to receiving the response from the science and socioeconomic panels on 3/21/01.)
- Monitoring, evaluation and adaptive management are critical to any marine reserve program.
- The CWG expressed frustration that the public view may not be reflected on the MRWG. The CWG believes that the public is generally supportive of maximum marine reserves.

### Management Plan

- Linda provided an update regarding the Management Plan Update process. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Draft Management Plan will be released in a couple months. In the meantime, extensive political opposition from D.C. and other sanctuary programs to the concept of boundary expansion appears to be surfacing. The CWG noted that the public here overwhelmingly supports maximum boundary expansion and increased protection of marine resources. Once again, the CWG expressed frustration that local public input is being ignored by the decision-makers.